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Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 R

DRAFTED BY EA/VN:O.A.BARTLEY:AOA
APPROVED BY EA/VN:O.A.BARTLEY
D - RWD;EMLING
S/S - MR. LUERS
---------- 020476
P 041353Z SEP 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 193370

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PFOR, VS
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PHUONG'S CALL ON THE ACTING SECRETARY

1.AT HIS REQUEST AMBASSADOR PHUONG CALLED ON ACTING SECRETARY INGERSOLL SEPTEMBER 3 TO TRANSMIT A LETTER FROM THIEU TO PRESIDENT FORD. THE LETTER WAS A REPLY TO PRESIDENT FORD'S AUGUST 10 LETTER TO THIEU AS CONTAINED IN EMBASSY TELEGRAM 11119.

2.PHUONG STATED THAT GVN HAD BEEN CONCERNED BY CHANGE OF U.S. PRESIDENTS BUT THAT HIS RECEPTION BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY ON THE DAY OF THE PRESIDENT'S ACCESSION HAD BEEN VERY GRATIFYING TO HIS GOVERNMENT. HE WAS AWARE THAT THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY HAD MADE A GREAT EFFORT TO RAISE ASSISTANCE LEVELS, ALTHOUGH, UNFORTUNATELY, THAT EFFORT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL. THE ACTING SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT WE HAD AT LEAST KEPT MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM GOING BELOW 700 MILLION DOLLARS.

3. PHUONG THEN DESCRIBED THE CURRENT SITUATION IN VIET-NAM AS DISTURBING. HE POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH ENEMY MILITARY PRESSURE MAY NOT BE CHARACTERIZED AS "GENERAL OFFENSIVE"
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IT WAS VERY HEAVY AND IF CONTINUED IT WOULD BE VERY

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DANGEROUS FOR THE GVN. HE REFERRED TO AMMUNITION SHORT AGES AND REMARKED THAT BOTH MEN AND SUPPLIES HAD TO BE DISTRIBUTED SO THINLY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY THAT THE ENEMY, WHO COULD PICK THE POINT OF ATTACK, COULD BE SUC- CESSFUL. HE ADDED THAT IF THE PRESENT TREND CONTINUED OUTPOSTS COULD BE "EATEN UP". PHUONG THOUGHT THE PRESENT ENEMY PRESSURE WAS PRIMARILY AN ATTEMPT TO GRAB POPULA- TION. THE ACTING SECRETARY AGREED AND NOTED THAT RECENT ENEMY ATTACKS HAD GENERATED NEW REFUGEES.

4.IN REFERENCE TO GVN RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES, PHUONG NOTED THAT SEVERAL FOREIGN MINISTERS FROM ARA AND AF HAD RECENTLY VISITED SAIGON AND THAT THE GVN WANTED TO SOLIDIFY ITS EXISTING FRIENDSHIP IN THOSE AREAS. HE ADDED THAT AF WAS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT FOR THE GVN AND SAID IDEALLY THAT THE GVN SHOULD OPEN MORE MISSIONS IN AF. THE ACTING SECRETARY ASKED IF THE GVN HAD ANY DEALINGS WITH EGYPT AND PHUONG REPLIED THAT THEY WERE ON AN "OFF AND ON" BASIS. HE SAID THAT THE GVN WAS ATTEMPTING TO WORK THROUGH SAUDI ARABIA IN ORDER TO GRANT EGYPT OVER- FLIGHT RIGHTS.

5.PHUONG MENTIONED RECENT OIL FINDS IN THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AS BEING ENCOURAGING AND HIGHLY USEFUL AS A MORALE BOOSTER. HE SAID THAT THE GVN MUST NOT BE PREMATURELY JUBILANT; HOWEVER, THAT EVEN IF OIL WERE FOUND IN COM- MERCIAL QUANTITY IT WOULD NOT RELIEVE THIS IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OF COMING TO THE USG FOR ASSISTANCE. HE THOUGHT IT COULD BE HIGHLY IMPORTANT HOWEVER IN ENSURING THAT CONGRESS KNEW THAT THE VIET-NAM COMMITMENT WAS NOT OPEN- ENDED. THE ACTING SECRETARY AGREED THAT THIS WAS INDEED IMPORTANT AND WAS THE APPROACH THAT WE MADE TO CONGRESS THIS YEAR.

6.THE ACTING SECRETARY COMMENTED THAT THE PLANNED IBRD MEETING ON OCTOBER 17 IN PARIS WAS ALSO ENCOURAGING IN THAT IT WOULD AFFORD AN ASSISTANCE CHANNEL FOR THOSE COUNTRIES THAT WANTED TO FOLLOW THE MULTILATERAL ROUTE. HE HOPED THAT THE MEETING WOULD LEAD TO A CONSORTIUM.
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MR. INGERSOLL ASKED WHAT PROGRESS HAD THE GVN MADE WITH JAPAN, FRANCE AND THE FRG WITH REGARD TO AID. PHUONG RE- PLIED THAT THOSE COUNTRIES WERE STILL NEGOTIATING BUT THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DID NOT EXPECT AN INCREASE THIS YEAR FROM FRANCE OR THE FRG. HIS GOVERNMENT WAS EMPHASIZING ITS APPROACHES TO JAPAN.

7.AMBASSADOR PHUONG INFORMED THE ACTING SECRETARY THAT

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FOREIGN MINISTER BAC WOULD BE IN THE U.S. DURING THE

LAST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER AND FIRST WEEK OF OCTOBER AND
HOPED THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE THE PRESIDENT. HE
STATED THAT IN NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE FOREIGN MINISTER
WOULD NOT REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE PRESIDENT BUT
THAT SUCH AN APPOINTMENT WOULD BE EXTREMELY USEFUL NOW IN
BOOSTING PUBLIC MORALE IN VIET-NAM. THE ACTING SECRETARY
AGREED THAT THIS WOULD BE USEFUL AND SAID THE DEPARTMENT
WOULD RECOMMEND SUCH A MEETING. HE CAUTIONED THAT HE
WAS NOT AWARE OF THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE BUT NOTED THAT
IT WOULD BE VERY CROWDED DURING THAT PERIOD. MR. INGERSOLL
STATED THAT HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO RECEIVE BAC HIMSELF. KISSINGER

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